Reviewer's report

Title: Colon biopsies for evaluation of Acute Graft-Versus-Host Disease (A-GVHD) in allogeneic bone marrow transplant patients.

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Reviewer: Nirag Jhala

Level of interest: A paper of considerable general medical or scientific interest

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

Colon biopsies for evaluation of acute graft versus host disease (A-GVHD) in allogeneic bone marrow transplant.
Shidham VB et al.
BMC Gastroenterology.

This is a timely and well thought out manuscript. It has many strengths and would be important to document features of A-GVHD in the literature and would be of interest to both gastroenterologists as well as pathologists. The study result supports the conclusion and the morphologic features can be used by others to follow.

One of the concerns is that the authors use colon biopsies in patients who have documented GVHD of skin within 15 days of its detection. It might be also be better to document if the therapy was started or not before obtaining the colon biopsy and following diagnosis of skin GVHD for the present study.

It may also strengthen the study if cases of colon biopsies from clinically considered GVHD who did not have skin GVHD are included in the study.

Some of the subjective parameters listed in the result section need to be elaborated in the material and method section for better understanding of the reader.

In addition, following are specific comments which need to be considered.

Comments:

Abstract
Page 2, lines 11 and 12: Does not make sense. The line begins with a number, and suggests that decreased number of lymphocytes are noted when the normal does not contain any.
Page 2, lines 14 and 15: It would be difficult to understand what is outer third of lamina propria a better morphologic definition would be more appropriate.

Page 2 (Conclusions): It would be better if parameters listed in the conclusion are noted to have been studied earlier in the study design or conclusion. Making a statement in conclusion would suggest that these conclusions were drawn from subjective parameters not studied in depth by authors.

Introduction
Page 3 paragraph 2 last line: The relevance of the statement in context of the present study is unclear.

**Competing interests:**

None declared.